

professionals bring to their work a warm, personal touch as well as valuable knowledge and skills.

Over the years Americans have come to equate Visiting Nurse Associations with reliable home health care for persons recuperating from illness or injury, for persons incapacitated by physical or mental disabilities, for the terminally ill, and for those suffering from chronically disabling diseases. These associations offer a wide range of medical care and support services—including specialized nursing, nutritional counseling, homemaker and home health aide services, as well as speech, physical, and occupational therapy. As nonprofit, community-based organizations, Visiting Nurse Associations not only stay attuned to the particular needs of individuals and families but also help to mitigate rising health care costs.

This week we gratefully recognize the important contribution that Visiting Nurse Associations make to our Nation's health care system. We also honor the generous, hardworking men and women who serve their fellow Americans through these valued organizations.

The Congress, by Public Law 101-468, has designated the week beginning February 17, 1991, as "National Visiting Nurse Associations Week" and has authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of this week.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE BUSH, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the week beginning February 17, 1991, as National Visiting Nurse Associations Week. I invite all Americans to observe this week with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this fifth day of February, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-one, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and fifteenth.

GEORGE BUSH

Proclamation 6247 of February 7, 1991

American Heart Month, 1991

*By the President of the United States of America
A Proclamation*

In recent years, we have learned much about what we can do to avoid heart attack, stroke, and other forms of cardiovascular disease. For example, we know how important it is to discourage use of tobacco products, particularly among young Americans. We also know that controlling blood pressure, following a diet low in fat and cholesterol, and exercising regularly are all prudent ways of reducing the risk of cardiovascular disease.

Although significant progress has been made in the struggle to overcome cardiovascular disease, we must not become complacent. Heart attack, stroke, and other forms of cardiovascular disease continue to

claim the lives of nearly 1 million Americans every year—one American approximately every 32 seconds.

Nearly 68 million Americans currently suffer from one or more forms of cardiovascular disease, including high blood pressure, coronary heart disease, rheumatic heart disease, and stroke. Contrary to widely held assumptions, heart disease does not occur primarily in old age; studies show that 5 percent of all heart attacks occur in people younger than age 40 and more than 45 percent occur in people younger than age 65.

Women as well as men are at risk. Heart attack is the number one killer of American women, surpassing even breast cancer and lung cancer. Almost half of the more than 500,000 persons who die each year of heart attack are women.

While statistics tell us much about the prevalence of cardiovascular disease in the United States, they cannot measure the pain and suffering endured by victims and their families. Heart attack and other forms of heart and blood vessel disease also inflict a heavy toll on our Nation in terms of health care costs and lost productivity. The annual costs of related medical services and lost work due to disability total in the billions of dollars.

Since 1948, the Federal Government, through the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, and the American Heart Association, a private nonprofit organization, have spent millions of dollars on educational programs and research into cardiovascular disease. The American Heart Association estimates that it has invested more than \$900 million in research since it became a national voluntary health organization in the late 1940s. That great investment has been made possible by the generosity of the American people and the dedicated efforts of more than 3 million volunteers.

During American Heart Month we recognize the importance of such ongoing efforts in the public and private sectors. We also reaffirm our commitment to overcoming cardiovascular disease.

The Congress, by Joint Resolution approved December 30, 1963 (77 Stat. 843; 36 U.S.C. 169b), has requested that the President issue an annual proclamation designating February as "American Heart Month."

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE BUSH, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the month of February 1991 as American Heart Month. I invite the Governors of the States, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, officials of other areas subject to the jurisdiction of the United States, and the American people to join me in reaffirming our commitment to combating cardiovascular diseases and stroke.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this seventh day of February, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-one, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and fifteenth.

GEORGE BUSH